# COLORADO'S WINNABLE BATTLES ELEVATING HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

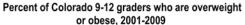
# **Obesity**

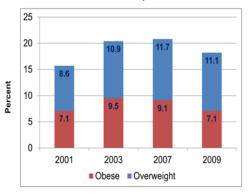
Despite Colorado's ranking as one of the leanest states in the nation, more than half of Colorado adults are overweight or obese. The proportion of Colorado adults who are obese more than doubled during the past 15 years, from 10.3 percent in 1996 to 21.4 percent in 2010. Obesity also threatens the health of future generations. Colorado ranks 29<sup>th</sup> among states in childhood obesity (ages 10-17 years). One of every eight children ages 2-14 in Colorado is obese.

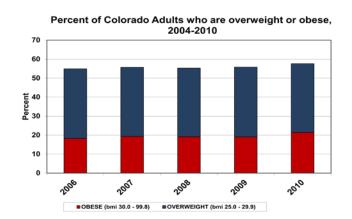
# Why is this important?

Obesity increases a person's risk for several serious illnesses: heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke and some types of cancer. As a result, health care for conditions related to obesity costs Coloradans more than \$1.6 billion each year. Children who are overweight are more likely to become obese adults, compared to normal-weight children.

## Where are we?

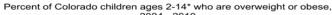


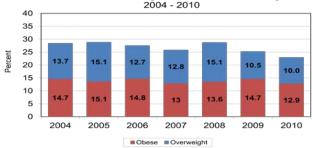




Source: Colorado Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Source: Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Health Statistics Section, CDPHE





\*For this age range, children with a Body Mass Index in the 85th-94.5th percentile are considered overweight and children with a BMI in the 95th percentile or above are considered obese

Source: Colorado Child Health Survey, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

#### **★** Colorado's 10 Winnable Battles ★

#### Where do we want to be?

#### By 2016,

- decrease the percentage of Colorado high school students who are overweight or obese to 17 percent;
- decrease the percentage of Colorado children aged 2-14 years who are overweight or obese to 20 percent; and
- decrease the percentage of Colorado adults who are overweight or obese to 50 percent.

# What is being done?

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and its partners are supporting proven and promising strategies to fight this battle by the following:

- Providing businesses with tools for creating incentives and welcoming environments for employees to be healthy and physically active
- Promoting best practices for schools to provide daily physical activity for students, adopt nutrition guidelines and partner with local farmers to serve fresh produce in school meals
- Encouraging health care professionals to adopt Colorado Adult and Childhood Obesity Guidelines to provide healthy lifestyle advice to their patients
- Assisting restaurant patrons in selecting healthy menu items with the Smart Meal seal
- Partnering with communities to design streets and neighborhoods to include bike paths and sidewalks and convenient linkages to parks, schools, grocery stores and community gathering places
- Supporting communities in developing community gardens, sponsoring affordable healthy-cooking and exercise classes, and offering team sports opportunities for people of all ages

# **High-risk groups**

- Adults ages 45–64 years (39 percent overweight, 22.8 percent obese)
- Non-Hispanic blacks (36.8 percent overweight, 26.6 percent obese)
- Hispanics (40.8 percent overweight, 25.5 percent obese)
- Adults who are non-high school graduates (37.9 percent overweight, 22.1 percent obese)
- Southeast Colorado residents (26 percent overweight, 27 percent obese)

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## **Underlying causes**

The causes of obesity are complex. They include genetic, metabolic, behavioral, environmental, cultural and socioeconomic factors. The immediate cause of overweight or obesity for most people is consuming more calories than they expend in physical activity. Colorado communities with the highest rates of obesity face limited access to healthy and affordable foods, recreational facilities, safe neighborhoods and preventive health care. These conditions make it difficult for healthy eating and physical activity to be easy choices for all Coloradans in the places where they live, learn, work and play.

<sup>(1)</sup> Trogdon, JG et al. 2011. "State- and payer-specific estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity." Obesity Volume 19, Issue 6.

<sup>(2)</sup> Magarey, AM et al. 2003. "Predicting obesity in early adulthood from childhood and parental obesity." *International Journal of Obesity* Volume 27.